



# REPUBLICAN DOCUMENTS.

## GEN. JACKSON AND JAMES BUCHANAN.

### LETTER FROM FRANCIS P. BLAIR.

#### TO THE PUBLIC.

Mr. Buchanan, through some of his partisans, uses the shadow of a great name to dim the bright original. Andrew Jackson, the child of a Mr. Donelson, adopted because a kin to Mrs. Jackson, is now induced to sign his name to letters given to the press, detracting from the reputation of General Jackson. To make the attempt effectual, the first effort is to impair the standing of the friends to whom he bequeathed the duty of defending his character, whenever unjustly assailed.

Mr. Jackson, who thus lends his name to this impious work, cannot be held entirely accountable. He is a weak-minded, credulous, dreamy schemer, forever brooding in silence over visionary projects, with which he cheats himself and does mischief to others; and when awakened to a sense of what he has done, is sorry for it. He is inoffensive, quiet, and well disposed to do what he is persuaded to do by those around him; is very willing to oblige, but, from utter want of judgment, is scarcely conscious of what is right for others or good for himself. General Jackson had an excessive tenderness for him. While he loved others attached to him for the ability and energy they exerted in any cause in which he was engaged, he loved "Andrew" more than all, because left to his tenderness by his wife, and because he was helpless and dependent.

While Biddle and his Briareus bank waged war upon him—while Calhoun and his Nullification conspiracy endangered the Union—while the giants Clay, Webster and Adams made every step of his administration a struggle—Andrew, although in the prime of life and living in the White House, was unconscious of the strife, and to those around him seemed wholly ignorant that there was in all this anything of importance. Although I was always on familiar and kindly terms with him, and the more so, as the business of the White House made it a solitude to him, I do not remember that I ever knew him, in the most exciting times, to open his mouth about politics; and now, for the first time during the twenty-six years I have known him, he, of a sudden, is brought out in

Mr. Buchanan's press as a political gladiator, to strike unconsciously the reputation of the father who gave him his fortune, and to destroy the character of one whom he thought most likely to defend it. Now I hold Mr. Jackson in every sense incapable of conceiving, much less executing this attempt; and I shall treat it, as the work of Mr. Buchanan and his emissaries. They are the interested parties. They have the motives for the undertaking, and the intrigue developed in the letters having Mr. Jackson's signature, is of a piece with all Mr. Buchanan's management.

The pretext for bringing Mr. Jackson before the public as my assailant is to repel this passage given from a letter of Gen. Jackson to Major Lewis:

"Your observations with regard to Mr. Buchanan are correct. *He showed a want of moral courage in the affair of the intrigue of Adams and Clay—did not do me justice in the expose he then made, and I am sure about that time did believe there was a perfect understanding between Adams and Clay about the Presidency and the Secretary of State. This I am sure of. But whether he viewed that there was any corruption in the case or not, I know not, but one thing I do know, that he wished me to combat them with their own weapons—that was, let my friends say if I was elected I would make Mr. Clay Secretary of State. This, to me, appeared deep corruption, and I repelled it with that honest indignation as [which] I thought it deserved.*"

I knew nothing of this publication, nor whence the extract from General Jackson's letter was obtained. Mr. Jackson, and those who obtained his signature to the following comment, knew that the letter quoted from was not written to me, nor furnished by me, but by Major Lewis; yet they so directly pointed at me in their animadversion as to make the inference inevitable to others, that it was derived from me:

"The undersigned, as the adopted son, executor and trusted friend of General Jackson, protests most solemnly against this unscrupulous use of the private and confidential correspondence of his father, and he appeals most confidently to the public to sustain him in this protest; he, himself, was the repository of most of his father's private papers, and has never consented to the publication of any of them, because"

E435  
B63  
copy 6.

he believes no such addition can be made, with justice to the memory of the deceased, until the men who served with him have passed from the stage of action. It would, however, be unfair to the feelings of those who may have been touched by the extracts or full letters from General Jackson, heretofore published, to withhold the testimony of the undersigned, that up to the close of his life he entertained for President Polk and Hon. James Buchanan the highest esteem and affection. In many conversations during his declining years, when in the full freedom of fireside ease, he spoke freely of their eminent services and moral worth; on no occasion did he ever intimate to his family that his confidence in them had abated, or his kindly feelings towards them undergone any change. It is well known to all who were well acquainted with General Jackson, that he clung with intense pertinacity to the interests of those 'whom he regarded as friends—as somewhat dependant; and whom he had raised up by his patronage.' These persons frequently (as can and might easily be shown) appealed earnestly to him for assistance in advancing their own schemes and views, even to the close of his life. Whilst suffering under a painful, withering disease, and earnestly pressed by every artful suggestion, he would have been more than human if he had not *permitted expressions of momentary irritation* to creep into private letters, and the fault of the expression was not in him who wrote, but rather in those whom he unwisely trusted.

"The letter of General Jackson in regard to Mr. Buchanan, written in February, 1845, (dated 28th,) extracts of which have been recently published, is precisely *one* of the character, and written under the circumstances above alluded to, and did not contain any deliberate conviction of his mind, as is simply shown by his cordial treatment of Mr. Buchanan during his whole administration—his appointment to Russia—his subsequent recommendation of him to others—and the fireside conversations with his family, to which I have before alluded.

"It is not the intention of the undersigned in this publication to interfere in the political conflicts of the day, or to do anything further than to protect the reputation and fame of his father, and preserve the consistency and harmony of a character dear to the whole American people. ANDREW JACKSON."

Although this was expressly applied to me by the Administration Organ at Washington; yet, as my name was not used in it, and I saw that the object was to embroil me with Mr. Jackson, for whom I felt great kindness, and who was considered by me the unwitting instrument of artful intriguers, I concluded to notice it. The contrivers, on this failure, induced Mr. Jackson then to put out this direct attack:

"Gen. Jackson, in one of his wills and testaments, had left his papers and documents to his friend Major John H. Eaton, but subsequently changed it to Mr. Blair. In speaking of his papers, he often asked me if I would like to take charge of them. My reply was, that I was young and inexperienced, and would greatly prefer, if it met his judgment, to have them left to an able and well-tried friend. Very soon thereafter Mr. Amos Kendall came on to the General, and solicited the loan of sufficient of his letters and papers to compile his history and life. The request was acceded to with pleasure, and the most important of his papers and documents were handed over to Mr. Kendall, and the balance would have been sent

on to him afterwards but for the arrival of Mr. Blair. Mr. Blair questioned the General about his papers and the writing of his life and history, stating that if he would leave them with him he would carefully arrange them for Mr. Bancroft; that he (Blair) had retired from politics to the shades of Silver Springs, and would guard scrupulously the sacredness of his memory and fame. My father with pleasure consented, and directed me after his decease to forward all of the important documents retained to Mr. Blair, except some private and confidential correspondence, which I was instructed to reserve. Mr. Kendall still retains all the papers which he received, and Mr. Blair some of less importance. General Jackson requested Mr. Kendall to retain the papers he had in his possession until he completed his life and history. It was no reflection upon any of General Jackson's immediate family, that such a disposition of his papers was made. It would have seemed indelicate in them to have made the use of them that others might very properly have done.

"In conclusion, I respectfully ask the public to observe why this vindictive personal abuse of me, and for what purpose. Simply because I deemed it proper and right, in justice to the reputation, memory, and fame of my father, when I saw the abuse that Mr. Blair had made of private documents, and the scandalous mis-use of the following extract from one of my father's private and confidential letters to a supposed friend, published recently in the *Republican Banner*, written February 28, 1845, some few months before his death, I saw proper to remonstrate in a public manner against it."

This story confutes itself—my visit to the Hermitage was in the spring of 1843. I had not then "retired from politics to the shades of Silver Spring." I was in the midst of that struggle against the Tyler administration which I hoped would result in the restoration of Mr. Van Buren and the democracy to power. I had no expectation then of retiring to private life, or of having leisure "carefully to arrange" General Jackson's papers for Mr. Bancroft. At the suggestion of Mr. Van Buren, in 1836, I mentioned Mr. Bancroft, the historian of the United States, to General Jackson as one who, if he had access to his papers, would make them useful to the history of the country, and connect with it a memoir of his life, which would make imperishable the public labors to which it had been devoted. General Jackson told me in reply, then, that he had promised the use of his papers to Mr. Kendall for the work I proposed for Mr. Bancroft.

When I went to the Hermitage in 1843, seven years after this conversation, I knew Mr. Kendall had these papers in his possession, and the thought of obtaining them for Mr. Bancroft, which was dismissed in 1836, could not, under such circumstances, have occurred. I am certain that nothing was said during my stay at the Hermitage in reference to changing the disposition of the papers already made by General Jackson, and it will be seen by the terms of the bequest made in 1845 to me, years after my visit, that there is no reference in it to the temporary use of them granted

to Mr. Kendall, or that suggested to assist Mr. Bancroft's historical labors.

The General closes his letter of the 9th of April, 1845, (commenting on the intrigue by which Mr. Calhoun and his friends, combining with Messrs. Polk, Buchanan and others, had defeated Mr. Van Buren's nomination at Baltimore, and concerted to supplant the *Globe* by a nullifying organ at Washington,) thus:

"This may be the last letter I may be able to write you; but live or die, I am your friend, (and never deserted one from *policy*.) and leave my papers and reputation in your keeping. As far as justice is due to my fame, I know you will shield it. I ask no more. I rest upon truth, and require nothing but what truth will mete to me. All my household join me in kind wishes for your health and prosperity, and that of all your family; and that you may triumph over all enemies. May God's choicest blessings be bestowed upon you and yours through life, is the prayer of your sincere friend,

"ANDREW JACKSON.

"F. P. BLAIR, Esq."

This letter, given at length in that addressed by me to the New York meeting in April last, exposing the conspiracy which severed the Jackson democracy and created a southern sectional party to rule the confederacy, shows on the face of it the motives which induced General Jackson to consign his papers to me. He saw in the course held by the government against the political organ he had established at Washington, that it would pass into the hands of his enemies. Having confidence in my fidelity, and seeing me stripped of the influence which the position he had conferred, gave, to support his principles, he bequeathed his papers to me, and the charge to defend his cause and his character.

This trust makes it my duty to expose the effort now made by Mr. Buchanan's partisan press, the *Nashville Union*, associated with its ally, the official organ at Washington, to impair the confidence of the country in General Jackson's exalted character for veracity. The principal agent in this attempt, as I learn from a letter in reply to one written to obtain the information, is the Hon. Cave Johnson, Mr. Buchanan's colleague in Mr. Polk's cabinet. This is confirmed by an extract given in the official organ from a letter of this gentleman, by which it appears he would excuse the attack made on Gen. Jackson's integrity by saying—"I shall not believe that he (Gen. Jackson) ever so expressed himself, until I see the letter in his own handwriting;" and yet he urges on the adopted son of Gen. Jackson to publish his views in derogation of Gen. Jackson's written testimony, without venturing to look at it to see if it is "in his own handwriting," although invited to do so. I give in advance to Mr. Buchanan's colleague the same invitation in respect to all the manuscript evidence I have used, or may hereafter use, to defend him against his

traducers. The assailant takes yet another and more successful mode of escaping the odium of impeaching the memory of a great man, by using his own illustrious name to sanction its degradation. It is like using the feather from the eagle's wing to give flight to the shaft that reaches him in the zenith, and brings him to the earth.

The paper prepared to bring down Gen. Jackson's fame from its height, opens with a solemn formula, which seems designed to make the impression that he had commissioned his adopted namesake to sign the death warrant for his memory after the body was laid in the grave:

"The undersigned, as the adopted son, executor and trusted friend of Gen. Jackson, protests most solemnly against this unscrupulous use of the private and confidential correspondence of his father, and he appeals most confidently to the public to sustain him in this protest; he himself was the repository of most of his father's private papers, and has never consented to the publication of any of them, because he believes that no such addition can be made with justice to the memory of the deceased until the men who served with him have passed from the stage of action."

This protest insinuates what "the adopted son, executor, and trusted friend of Gen. Jackson" is drawn out to prove, while he is made to deprecate it. "*He never consented to the publication of any of his father's private papers, because he believes no such addition can be made with justice to the memory of the deceased, until the men who served with him have passed from the stage of action.*"

Does not this intimate that Gen. Jackson in his private papers has said of those who served with him that which cannot bear the light while they live to repel it? And then this "adopted son and trusted friend" is made to say that his father, "in the full freedom of fireside ease," "and in many conversations," had said that he had "the highest esteem and affection for Mr. Buchanan," and spoke freely of "his eminent services and moral worth," while his letters, written with his own hand, and when he felt the hand of death upon him, reaffirm, after twenty years of calm consideration, what he had publicly pronounced to be his deliberate conviction in regard to Mr. Buchanan's conduct in 1825. And what he denounced to Mr. Buchanan himself, when he made the proposal, to be "such means of bargain and corruption he would see the earth open and swallow both Mr. Clay and his friends and myself with them," rather than use, he adhered to at the close of life—and yet "the adopted son and trusted friend" is made to say that the same sentiment as to Mr. Buchanan's conduct, expressed twenty years later by him in a letter to Major Lewis, is not "*the deliberate conviction of his mind*," that when the General wrote that Mr. Buchanan was capable of "*deep corruption*," in regard to the Chief Magistracy of his country, he was in his fireside cou-



versations extolling Mr. Buchanan's "moral worth." He is made artfully to imply that the publication of Gen. Jackson's confidential correspondence was a breach of trust, revealing this contradiction, when it was only so upon the supposition that the adopted son's oral account of the General's real estimate of Mr. Buchanan's character is the only true one, and not the written statement under his own hand.

He is made to claim for himself the right of being what he calls "the Repository" of Gen. Jackson's papers, when he knows that they were bequeathed to me and that he wrote to me immediately on the General's death that it was his dying order to him as Executor, to deliver them over to me, and that if he retains any of them he violates that injunction, and is himself guilty of a breach of trust. They make him charge it as "an abuse that Mr. Blair had made of private documents," although they were exclusively of public interest and when the first publication of them was made, it was accompanied with this express permission:

"If any of my opinions may be useful to sustain the great Republican cause, and open the eyes of the people to their best interests, in bringing back the administration of our Government to the real reading and principles of the Constitution as explained and practised by the sages who founded it, it is due from me to the people that my opinions, if desired, should be known to them. \* \* \* \* \*

"Sincerely your friend, ANDREW JACKSON.  
"To F. P. BLAIR, Esq."

The publication of what he wrote about the intrigue which defeated his election in the house of Representatives, Mr. Colton, in his life of Clay, shows, was directly invited by him, in a card to the Nashville Union, closing with these words:

"If General Hamilton or any one else has a letter from me on this subject, all they have to do is to apply to him for it. *As for myself, I have no secrets, and do not fear the publication of all I have ever written on this or any other subject.*" "ANDREW JACKSON."

Although I had not the least agency in producing this evidence of General Jackson's dissatisfaction with Mr. Buchanan—did not, indeed, know of the existence of the letter—its publication, and the attempt to discredit it by drawing up insidious statements for the signature of an adopted son, to prove that the father had expressed opinions entirely incompatible with his written declarations made at the same time, calls on me to examine whether General Jackson's written avowal is not sustained by the history of the transaction referred to, and whether the suggestions put into the mouth of the adopted son, when tested by it, can avail to weigh down the veracity of the father, and to place Mr. Buchanan's above it. I will array recorded facts and a train of undisputed circumstances, apart from General Jackson's own testimony, which establish every assertion of his letter to Major Lewis.

I feel more imperatively called to the discussion of this subject because Mr. Colton, in his Life of Clay, published since General Jackson's death, has given a most unjust and distorted view of it, to tarnish the General's fame, founding his argument on the corrupt proposals said to have been made by Mr. Buchanan to Mr. Clay, but which the latter, at the "earnest entreaty" of the former, kept profoundly secret while the General lived. From Mr. Colton's own book, I will collect a succinct statement of all the testimony bearing on the essential points, which will show how thoroughly General Jackson stands vindicated as regards Mr. Clay, and how perfectly he is justified in the opinion entertained of Mr. Buchanan, although kept in absolute ignorance of the remarkable overture of Mr. Buchanan, proposing the premiership to Mr. Clay on the contingency of General Jackson's election. Without encumbering this paper with the arguments of any of the parties to this controversy, I will give the *issues*, as made between the principals, and the *statements* of the individuals out of whose action the controversy grew. The testimony of these parties, as copied by Mr. Colton from the authentic documents put into his hands by Mr. Clay, amply vindicate General Jackson.

It is not my purpose to inculpate Mr. Clay. The grave has closed over him and Gen. Jackson, and should close the contest between the rivals which they chose to wage in person. But the *originator* of the feud, who survives and uses the pliable namesake of one of them to lend him the support of his name to damage the reputation of the man whom he should venerate as a father, can claim no such immunity. The political intriguer, whose approaches Gen. Jackson, in his own emphatic manner, rebuked at the instant, must now meet the General's reiterated reprobation, inscribed by his own hand in his dying hour, written to a distant friend, not with reports and hearsays from his fireside in which he is made to contradict himself, but by an appeal to the recorded facts on which Gen. Jackson founded his opinions. Here is the history of the events written out by the actors in them:

Carter Beverly, being on a visit to the Hermitage with other Virginians, interrogated Gen. Jackson as to the overtures made to obtain his promise of the State Department, to secure votes for himself as President.

Gen. Jackson then related the circumstances attending Mr. Buchanan's application to him, repeating the conversation between them. Mr. Beverly, in a letter to a friend in North Carolina, immediately reported what Gen. Jackson had said. This being disputed, Mr. Beverly appealed to Gen. Jackson for a written statement. It is thus quoted in Colton's "Life of Clay":

"HERMITAGE, June 6th, 1827.

"Early in January, 1825, a member of Congress of high respectability visited me one morning, and observed, that he had a communication he was desirous to make to me; that he was informed there was a great intrigue going on, and that it was right I should be informed of it; that he came as a friend, and let me receive the communication as I might, the friendly motives through which it was made, he hoped would prevent any change of friendship or feeling in regard to him. To which I replied, from his high standing as a gentleman and member of Congress, and from his uniform friendly and gentlemanly conduct toward myself, I could not suppose he would make any communication to me which he supposed was improper. Therefore, his motives being pure, let me think as I might of the communication, my feelings towards him would remain unaltered. The gentleman proceeded: He said he had been informed by the friends of Mr. Clay, that the friends of Mr. Adams had made overtures to them, saying, if Mr. Clay and his friends would unite in the aid of Mr. Adams's election. Mr. Clay should be Secretary of State; that the friends of Mr. Adams were urging, as a reason to induce the friends of Mr. Clay to accede to their proposition, that if I were elected President, Mr. Adams would be continued Secretary of State, (innuendo, there would be no room for Kentucky); that the friends of Mr. Clay stated, the west did not wish to separate from the west, and if I would say, or permit any of my confidential friends to say, that in case I were elected President, Mr. Adams should not be continued Secretary of State, by a complete union of Mr. Clay and his friends they would put an end to the Presidential contest in one hour. And he was of opinion it was right to fight such intriguers with their own weapons. To which, in substance, I replied, that in politics, as in everything else, my guide was principle; and contrary to the expressed and unbiassed will of the people, I never would step into the Presidential chair; and requested him to say to Mr. Clay and his friends (for I did suppose he had come from Mr. Clay, although he used the term of 'Mr. Clay's friends') that before I would reach the Presidential chair by such means of bargain and corruption, I would see the earth open and swallow both Mr. Clay and his friends and myself with them. If they had not confidence in me to believe, if I were elected, that I would call to my aid in the Cabinet men of the first virtue, talent and integrity, not to vote for me. The second day after this communication and reply, it was announced in the newspapers that Mr. Clay had come out openly and avowedly in favor of Mr. Adams. It may be proper to observe, that, on the supposition that Mr. Clay was not privy to the proposition stated, I may have done injustice to him. If so, the gentleman informing me can explain.

"I am, very respectfully,

"Your most obedient servant,

(Signed)

"ANDREW JACKSON.  
"MR. CARTER BEVERLEY."

—[*Colton's Clay*, page 324, vol. 1.]

This was shown to Mr. Clay's friends at Wheeling, being received the night preceding Mr. Clay's arrival there, and was put into his hands by them the next morning. On Mr. Clay's arrival at Lexington, Kentucky, whither he was going, he put out a card denying what he called the charges of Gen. Jackson. He said:

"General Jackson having at last voluntarily placed himself in the attitude of my public accuser, we are now fairly at issue. I rejoice that a specific accusation, by a responsible accuser, has at length appeared, though at the distance of near two years and a half since the charge was first put forth through Mr. George Kremer. It will be universally admitted that the accusation is of the most serious nature. Hardly any more atrocious could be preferred against the representative of the people in his official character. The charge in substance is, that deliberate propositions of bargain were made by my congressional friends collectively, through an authorized and distinguished member of Congress, to General Jackson; that their object was, by these 'means of bargain and corruption,' to exclude Mr. Adams from the department of state, or to secure my promotion to office, and that I was privy and assented to these propositions and to the employment of those means.

"Such being the accusation, and the prosecutor and the issue between us, I have now a right to expect that he will substantiate his charges by the exhibition of satisfactory evidence. In that event, there is no punishment that would exceed the measure of my offence. In the opposite event, what ought to be the judgment of the American public is, cheerfully submitted to their wisdom and justice.

(Signed.)

"H. CLAY.

"Lexington, 29th June, 1827."

[*Colton's Clay*, pages 312. Vol. 1.]

In reply to this, General Jackson denied that he was an accuser, but simply the narrator of facts in reference to the disposition of Mr. Clay and his friends as to the Presidential election, coming from a source on which he had reliance—he repeated the information thus derived, and then gives the proof of it demanded by Mr. Clay in this paragraph:

"This disclosure was made to me by Mr. James Buchanan, a member of Congress from Pennsylvania, a gentleman of the first respectability and intelligence. The evening before he had communicated substantially the same proposition to Major Eaton, my colleague in the Senate, with a desire, warily manifested, that he should communicate with me, and ascertain my views on the subject. This he declined doing, suggesting to Mr. Buchanan that he, as well as himself, could converse with me and ascertain my opinion on the matter—though, from his knowledge of me, he thought he could conjecture my answer, that I would enter into no engagement whatever. It was the morning succeeding this interview, after Major Eaton had objected to converse with me on the subject, and before I had set out from my lodgings to the Capitol, that Mr. Buchanan came to visit me, and where the conversation I have stated took place. The answer returned has already been published, and need not be here repeated. \* \* \* \* \*

"Under all the circumstances appearing at the time, I did not resist the impression that Mr. Buchanan had approached me, on the cautiously-submitted proposition of some authorized person; and, therefore, in giving him my answer, did request him to say to Mr. Clay and his friends what that answer had been. Whether the communication was made to Mr. Clay and his friends, I know not. This, though, I do know, that, while the opinions and course of Mr. Clay, as to the election, were but matter of conjecture with many, at and before this time, very shortly after this conversation took place, his and his friends' opinions

became forthwith matter of certainty and general knowledge. Still, I have not said, nor do I now say, that the proposal made to me, was with the 'privity and consent' of Mr. Clay; neither have I said that his friends in Congress made propositions to me."

(Signed.) "ANDREW JACKSON.

"HERMITAGE, July 18, 1827."

[*Colton's Clay, pages 333-4. Vol. 1.*

Mr. Buchanan, thus called out, replied in the *Lancaster Journal*, and after stating that he was prompted in his movements by a rumor 'that General Jackson had determined, should he be elected President, to continue Mr. Adams Secretary of State,' he comes to the point put in issue, and thus relates the circumstances which brought him with his proposals to General Jackson:

"In the month of December, 1824, a short time after the commencement of the session of Congress, I heard, among other rumors then in circulation, that General Jackson had determined, should he be elected President, to continue Mr. Adams Secretary of State. Although I felt certain he had never intimated such an intention, yet I was sensible that nothing could be better calculated both to cool the ardor of his friends and inspire his enemies with confidence, than the belief that he had already selected his chief competitor for the highest office within his gift. I thought General Jackson owed it to himself, and to the cause in which his political friends were engaged, to contradict this report; and to declare that he would not appoint to that office the man, however worthy he might be, who stood at the head of the most formidable part of his political enemies. These being my impressions, I addressed a letter to a confidential friend in Pennsylvania, then and still high in office, and exalted in character, and one who had ever been the decided advocate of General Jackson's election, requesting his opinion and advice upon the subject. I received his answer, dated the 27th of December, 1824, upon the 29th, which is now before me, and which strengthened and confirmed my previous opinion. I then finally determined, either that I would ask General Jackson myself, or get another of his friends to ask him, whether he had ever declared he would appoint Mr. Adams his Secretary of State. In this manner I hoped, a contradiction of the report might be obtained from him, or he might probably declare it was not his intention to appoint Mr. Adams.

"A short time previous to the receipt of the letter to which I have referred, my friend, Mr. Markley, and myself got into conversation, as we very often did both before and after, upon the subject of the presidential election, and concerning the person who would probably be selected by General Jackson to fill the office of Secretary of State. I feel sincerely sorry that I am compelled thus to introduce his name, but I do so with the less reluctance because it has already, without any agency of mine, found its way into the newspapers, in connection with this transaction.

"Mr. Markley adverted to the rumor, which I have mentioned, and said it was calculated to injure the General. He observed that Mr. Clay's friends were warmly attached to him, and that he thought they would endeavor to act in concert with him at the election; that if they did so, they would either elect Mr. Adams or General Jackson at their pleasure, but

that many of them would never agree to vote for the latter, if they knew he had predetermined to prefer another to Mr. Clay for the first office in his gift; and that some of the friends of Mr. Adams had already been holding out the idea, that in case he were elected, Mr. Clay might, probably, be offered the situation of Secretary of State.

"I told Mr. Markley that I felt confident General Jackson had never said he would appoint Mr. Adams Secretary of State, because he was not in the habit of conversing upon the subject of the election; and if he were, whatever might be his secret intention, he had more prudence than to make such a declaration. I mentioned to him that I had been thinking, either that I would call upon the General myself, or get one of his other friends to do so, and thus endeavor to get from him a contradiction of the report, although I doubted whether he would hold any conversation upon the subject.

"Mr. Markley urged me to do so; and observed, if General Jackson had not determined whom he would appoint Secretary of State, and should say that it would not be Adams, it might be of great advantage to our cause for us to declare, upon his own authority. We should then be placed upon the same footing with the Adams men, and might fight them with their own weapons. That the western members would naturally prefer voting for a western man, if there were a probability that the claims of Mr. Clay to the second office in the government should be fairly estimated; and that if they thought proper to vote for General Jackson, they could soon decide the contest in his favor.

"A short time after this conversation, on the 30th of December, 1824, (I am able to fix the time not only from my own recollection, but from letters which I wrote on that day, on the day following, and on the 2d of January, 1825,) I called upon General Jackson. After the company had left him by which I found him surrounded, he asked me to take a walk with him; and while we were walking together upon the street, I introduced the subject. I told him I wished to ask him a question in relation to the Presidential election: that I knew he was unwilling to converse upon the subject; that, therefore, if he deemed the question improper he might refuse to give it an answer; that my only motive in asking it was friendship for him, and I trusted he would excuse me for introducing a subject about which I knew he wished to be silent.

"His reply was complimentary to myself, and accompanied with a request, that I would proceed. I then stated to him, there was a report in circulation, that he had determined he would appoint Mr. Adams Secretary of State, in case he were elected President, and that I wished to ascertain from him whether he had ever intimated such an intention; that he must at once perceive how injurious to his election such a report might be; that no doubt there were several able and ambitious men in the country, among whom I thought Mr. Clay might be included, who were aspiring to that office; and, if it were believed he had already determined to appoint his chief competitor, it might have a most unhappy effect upon their exertions, and those of their friends; that, unless he had so determined, I thought this report should be promptly contradicted under his own authority.

"I mentioned it had already done him some injury, and proceeded to relate to him the substance of the conversation I had held with Mr. Markley. I do not remember whether I mentioned his name, or



merely described him as a friend of Mr. Clay. After I had finished, the General declared he had not the least objection to answer my question; that he thought well of Mr. Adams, but had never said, or intimated, that he would, or would not, appoint him Secretary of State; that these were secrets he would keep to himself—he would conceal them from the very hairs of his head; that if he believed his right hand then knew what his left would do on the subject of appointments to office, he would cut it off and cast it into the fire; that if he should be ever elected President, it would be without solicitation and without intrigue on his part; that he would then go into office perfectly free and untrammelled, and would be left at perfect liberty to fill the offices of the government with the men whom, at the time, he believed to be the ablest and the best in the country.

"I told him that his answer to my question was such a one as I had expected to receive, if he answered it at all; and that I had not sought to obtain it for my own satisfaction. I then asked him if I were at liberty to repeat his answer. He said, I was at perfect liberty to do so, to any person I thought proper. I need scarcely remark that I afterwards availed myself of the privilege. The conversation upon this topic here ended, and in all our intercourse since, whether personally or in the course of our correspondence, General Jackson never once adverted to the subject, prior to the date of his letter to Mr. Beverley.

"I do not recollect that General Jackson told me I might repeat his answer to Henry Clay and his friends; though I should be sorry to say he did not. The whole conversation being upon a public street, it might have escaped my observation.

\* \* \* \* \*

(Signed) "JAMES BUCHANAN.  
"LANCASTER, 8th August, 1827."

[Colton's Clay, pages 353-4. Vol. I.]

Mr. Markley, the party referred to by Mr. Buchanan as the friend of Mr. Clay, states that Mr. Buchanan came to his room, he believes, but cannot say with certainty, on the 30th December, 1824. He was alone, and repeats what Mr. Buchanan says about his solicitude for General Jackson, and the rumors about his making Mr. Adams his secretary, and then continued his account of Mr. Buchanan's conversation thus:

"Mr. Buchanan stated, that he had written to, or received a letter from, a mutual friend of ours in Pennsylvania, on the subject of the Presidential election and cabinet appointments, and that he had determined to call upon the General himself, or to get Major Eaton to mention to him the reports that were in circulation, and obtain, if he could, a contradiction of them. Mr. Buchanan also asked, if I had seen Mr. Clay, and whether I had any conversation with him, touching the Presidential election? I replied that I had seen him in the house, but had had no conversation with him on that subject; but said, I was anxious to get an opportunity to have a conversation with him, as I felt a great anxiety that he should vote with Pennsylvania. Mr. Buchanan replied, that no one felt more anxious, for various reasons, than he did himself; that it was important not only for the success of Gen. Jackson's election, that Mr. Clay should go with Pennsylvania, but on account of his ulterior political prospects—declaring that he

[Mr. Buchanan] hoped to see Mr. Clay President of the United States, and that was another reason why he should like to see Mr. Clay Secretary of State, in case Gen. Jackson was elected; and that, if he were certain that Mr. Clay's views were favorable to Gen. Jackson's election, he would take an opportunity of talking with Gen. Jackson on the subject, or get Major Eaton to do so; that he thought, by doing so, he would confer a particular benefit on his country, and that he could see nothing wrong in it. *Mr. Buchanan urged me to use no delay in seeing Mr. Clay.* I told him I would, and accordingly called upon Mr. Clay, at his boarding-house, I think the evening after this conversation; but he was not at his lodgings. I called to see him again, but he had some of his friends with him, and I had no opportunity of conversing with him, nor had I ever any conversation with him, until the evening of the 10th or 11th of January, prior to my leaving Washington for Pennsylvania, to attend the courts in Montgomery county. The conversation I then had with him was of a very general character. No mention was made of cabinet appointments, and I did not ascertain which of the candidates Mr. Clay would support.

"I have no recollection of anything being said, in the conversation with Mr. Buchanan, about the friends of Mr. Clay moving in concert at the election. I, however, distinctly recollect that we both expressed an anxious hope that the West would not separate from Pennsylvania. I have no recollection whatever of having urged Mr. B. to see General Jackson, although I concurred in the propriety of his suggestion, that he should call to see him. Nor have I the faintest recollection of anything being said about fighting Mr. Adams's friends with their own weapons. If any such expressions were used I am very certain it was not by me. *From the recollection I have of the conversation to which Mr. Buchanan has reference, in his letter to the public of the 8th of August last, my impressions are, that the object of his visit that evening was to urge the propriety of my seeing Mr. Clay, and to give him my views as to the importance of his identifying himself with Pennsylvania in support of General Jackson.* I entertained no doubt that Mr. Buchanan was honestly determined, that no exertions, on his part, should be wanting, and that he felt confident he could speak with certainty as to the great mass of General Jackson's friends, that, in case of the election of General Jackson, they would press upon him the appointment of Mr. Clay as Secretary of State.

"Mr. Buchanan concurred with me in opinion that Pennsylvania would prefer Mr. Clay's appointment to that of any other person as Secretary of State, and from the obligation the General was under to Pennsylvania, that he would go far to gratify her wishes, and that, therefore, he believed the General, if elected, would appoint Mr. Clay.

\* \* \* \* \*

(Signed) "PHILIP S. MARKLEY.  
"Philadelphia, October 30, 1827."  
—Colton's Clay, pages 355-6, vol. 1.

Here is Major Eaton's testimony touching the application made by Mr. Buchanan to him to sound General Jackson as to his willingness to tender the office of Secretary of State as a make-weight in his Presidential scale:

"In January, 1825, a few days before it had been known that Mr. Clay and his friends had declared in

favor of Mr. Adams, I was called upon by Mr. Buchanan of Pennsylvania. He said it was pretty well ascertained that overtures were making by the friends of Adams on the subject of cabinet appointments; that Jackson should fight them with their own weapons. He said the opinion was, that Jackson would retain Adams, and that it was doing him injury; that the General should state whom he would make Secretary of State, and desired that I would name it to him. My reply was, that I was satisfied General Jackson would say nothing on the subject. Mr. Buchanan then remarked, Well, if he will merely say he will not retain Mr. Adams that will answer. I replied, I was satisfied General Jackson would neither say who should, nor who should not, be Secretary of State, but that he (Mr. Buchanan) knew him well, and might talk with him as well as I could. Mr. Buchanan then said, that on the next day, before the General went to the Senate, he would call. He did so, as I afterwards understood. \* \* \*

(Signed,) "JOHN H. EATON.

"FRANKLIN, Tennessee, September 12, 1827."

—[*Colton's Clay*, page 358, vol. 1.

It is clearly established, from Mr. Buchanan's own cautions, studiously-guarded, constrained admissions—from the statement of Mr. Markley, whom he calls his friend and the friend of Mr. Clay in the transaction—from the testimony of Major Eaton, which was drawn up by him and put into Mr. Buchanan's hands the year before the latter explained himself upon the subject—that Mr. Buchanan was the prime mover of the intrigue which General Jackson's frank declaration of the attempt made on him coerced to a development. From Mr. Buchanan's own showing it is manifest, that he had a confidential correspondence with a friend in Pennsylvania on the subject of bringing the premiership to bear on the Presidential election—a correspondence which, while he admits its importance, he withholds from the public. It appears that this "DETERMINED" him to act on Gen. Jackson with a view to make the Secretary's appointment give direction to the Presidential election. It appears that he sought Mr. Markley at his own room, and, as Mr. Clay's friend, asked his co-operation in the scheme, and urged him "to use no delay in seeing Mr. Clay." That the object of his (Mr. Buchanan's) visit (to Mr. Markley) that evening was to urge the propriety of his seeing Mr. Clay and to give him his view as to the importance of his identifying himself with Pennsylvania in support of General Jackson, and that his (Mr. Buchanan's) solicitude "was on account of his (Mr. Clay's) ulterior political prospects—declaring that he (Mr. Buchanan) hoped to see Mr. Clay President of the United States, and that was another reason why he should like to see Mr. Clay Secretary of State in case General Jackson was elected."

It appears that Mr. Buchanan also attempted to enlist Major Eaton, as the friend of General Jackson, in carrying his point with him; that he urged on him "that it was pretty well ascertained that overtures were making by the friends of Mr. Adams on the sub-

ject of Cabinet appointments—that Jackson should fight them with their own weapons."

It appears that Major Eaton declined the service proposed, and that Mr. Markley failed, after making three attempts to accomplish anything favorable to Mr. Buchanan's design with Mr. Clay. It appears that Mr. Buchanan then made his movement immediately and personally on both Mr. Clay and General Jackson. It is now revealed, and in a written statement made by Mr. Clay, and given in Mr. Colton's *Life of Clay*, published while Mr. Clay lived, but since General Jackson's death, that Mr. Buchanan undertook the task of ascertaining how Mr. Clay would receive the tender made by him of the premiership in a Jackson cabinet. This account of the long-suppressed secret overture on the part of Mr. Buchanan, testing Mr. Clay's inclinations, is marked throughout by italics, in the volume, to distinguish it from statements made by the author of the work:

"Some time in January, 1825, and not long before 'the election of President of the United States by the House of Representatives, the Hon. James Buchanan, then a member of the House, and afterwards 'many years a senator of the United States, from Pennsylvania, who had been a zealous and influential supporter of General Jackson, in the preceding canvass, and was supposed to enjoy his unbounded confidence, called at the lodgings of Mr. Clay, in the city of Washington. Mr. Clay was at that time in the room of his only messmate in the house, his intimate and confidential friend, the Hon. R. P. Letcher, since Governor of Kentucky, then also a member of the House. Shortly after Mr. Buchanan's entry into the room, he introduced the subject of the approaching Presidential election, and spoke of the certainty of the election of his favorite, adding, that 'he would form the most splendid cabinet that the country had ever had.' Mr. Letcher asked 'How could he have one more distinguished than that of Mr. Jefferson, in which were both Madison and Gallatin?' 'Where would he be able to find 'equally eminent men?' Mr. Buchanan replied 'that 'He would not go out of this room for a Secretary of State,' looking at Mr. Clay. This gentleman [Mr. Clay] playfully remarked, that 'he thought there was no timber there fit for a cabinet officer, unless it were Mr. Buchanan himself.'

"Mr. Clay, while he was so hotly assailed with the charge of bargain, intrigue, and corruption, during the administration of Mr. Adams, notified Mr. Buchanan of his intention to publish the above occurrence; but, by the earnest entreaties of that gentleman, he was induced to forbear doing so."

"The author has understood, that several times, in later years, it has been intimated to Mr. Buchanan that it might be his [Mr. Clay's] duty to publish



"these facts, and that he was dissuaded from it by Mr. Buchanan."

—[*Colton's Life and Times of Henry Clay*, page 418.

Mr. Colton yet retains the manuscript of this in Mr. Clay's handwriting, and to which "Mr. Clay appended a note, advising him (Mr. Colton) to apply to Governor Letcher for further information. He accordingly addressed Governor Letcher, and found his lips sealed by a pledge of silence given to Mr. Buchanan."

Governor Letcher applied to Mr. Buchanan in 1844, to be released from this pledge, which he declined in a letter, restating his promise, and insisting on his honor to observe it, in these words:

"The publication, then, of this private conversation, could serve no other purpose than to embarrass me, and force me prominently into the pending contest—which I desire to avoid.

"You are certainly correct in your recollection. You told me explicitly that you did not feel at liberty to give the conversation alluded to, and would not do so under any circumstances, without my express permission." In this, you have acted, as you have ever done, like a man of honor and principle.

"JAMES BUCHANAN."

The late contribution of Mr. Clay to the history of Mr. Buchanan's plot, with the refusal of the latter to let the whole be known by permitting Mr. Letcher to reveal the conversation held with him, if it had seen the light while General Jackson lived, would have confirmed the supposition on which he acted when Mr. Buchanan first approached him on the subject. He says: "I did suppose he had come from Mr. Clay, although he used the term of Mr. Clay's friends," and "therefore, in giving him the answer, did request him to say to Mr. Clay and his friends, what that answer had been." This answer did not suit Mr. Buchanan's design, and hence it seems he forgot to give it to Mr. Clay, or that it was ever given to him, and forgot also his visit and proposal to Mr. Clay, now verified by Messrs. Clay and Letcher, and repeatedly brought to his recollection "several times in later years, it having been intimated to Mr. Buchanan that it might be his (Mr. Clay's) duty to publish these facts, but that he was dissuaded from it by Mr. Buchanan."

Unless Mr. Clay and Governor Letcher have conspired to fabricate a falsehood to impeach Mr. Buchanan, as he would have us believe, he did approach Mr. Clay to tempt him with the premiership. There are pregnant circumstances and other evidence to prove it. Mr. Markley repeats and insists on the fact that Mr. Buchanan "urged him to use no delay to see Mr. Clay," because, "if he were certain that Mr. Clay's views were favorable to Gen. Jackson's election, he would take an early opportunity of talking with General Jackson on the subject, or get Major Eaton to do it."

This shows that Mr. Buchanan was intent to ascertain whether "Mr. Clay's views were favorable" before he hazarded General Jackson's displeasure by proposing to him a somewhat corrupt process to reach presidential honors. He told Major Eaton that it was "pretty well ascertained that overtures were making by the friends of Mr. Adams." Why, then, might he not make overtures in a delicate way to Mr. Clay? He had urged Mr. Markley to do it. Mr. Markley's three trials had proved abortive, and he had gone to attend his courts in Pennsylvania. The time of decision was approaching, and it was necessary, if any bargain could be struck to unite the great western rivals, Mr. Buchanan must himself be the go-between, Markley having failed to get the opportunity with Mr. Clay, and Major Eaton refusing to go to General Jackson.

The great scheme which Mr. Buchanan had contrived, to make his friend, Gen. Jackson, President, his friend Clay secretary—with the safe precedent in hand to assure him of the succession if crowned with success by his interposition, could hardly fail to put Mr. Buchanan in the line of heirship under the new dynasty. The Virginia triumvirate—Jefferson, Madison, Monroe—had made an official succession which ambitious politicians were eager to emulate. Mr. Buchanan resolved to court the good graces of Mr. Clay, in which he had already made some progress. He approached him with "the safe precedent" in his hand, which he had previously told Mr. Markley would bring the Presidency to Mr. Clay after it. He spoke to Mr. Clay "of the certainty of the election of his favorite, Gen. Jackson, adding "that he would form the most splendid cabinet the country had ever seen." Mr. Letcher asked, "how could he have one more distinguished than that of Mr. Jefferson, in which were both Madison and Gallatin?" Mr. Buchanan replied, "that he would not go out of this room for a Secretary of State"—looking at Mr. Clay.

Mr. Buchanan has a cunning leer, with a cast of the eye, which renders it impossible to mistake the object of his address when he fixes his look. Hence, although Mr. Letcher asked the question, Mr. Clay saw that the reply was meant for him, and therefore tells us "that he playfully remarked that he thought there was no timber there fit for a cabinet officer, unless it were Mr. Buchanan himself." How Mr. Buchanan interpreted this playful compliment to himself, given in return for the earnest one placing Mr. Clay above the splendid statesman who adorned the State Department in Mr. Jefferson's time, is not left to conjecture. He saw no repulse in the suggestion from Mr. Clay, which would assign to Mr. Buchanan himself the place he wished to give to secure the election of President. If he should command for Mr. Clay what he himself was thought worthy to hold, it

would increase the obligation he sought to confer. Mr. Clay's remark was, doubtless, meant to draw him out further, and make him show his hand fully, although I believe he never meant to accept it. Mr. Buchanan was not prepared for this. It was necessary, before he used names and proposed stipulations, that he should know how General Jackson would relish his plot; accordingly he went to the General and broached it. That the proposal was received with a burst of indignation, Mr. Buchanan himself cannot conceal. So far from being willing to pledge the State Department to secure his election, he repelled the idea by saying, "these were secrets he would keep to himself—he would conceal them from the very hairs of his head; that if he believed his right hand knew what his left would do on the subject of appointments to office, he would cut it off and cast it into the fire," &c. Mr. Buchanan omits what General Jackson gives as the conclusion of his response, "that, before I would reach the Presidential chair by such means of bargain and corruption, I would see the earth open and swallow both Mr. Clay and his friends, and myself with them."

General Jackson, when strongly moved, uttered his feelings with vehemence, and as his mind fired, with cumulative figures. It is not improbable, therefore, that the language remembered by Mr. Buchanan was employed, and worked up that heat which exploded in the denunciation that blew up Mr. Buchanan's plot. But how can Mr. Buchanan be believed, when he says in the next line, that this answer to his question was such an one "as he expected to receive"—such an one as he sought to obtain, not for his own, but for the satisfaction of others, and begged leave to repeat it! How can this be believed when Mr. Buchanan says his object was to get Gen. Jackson "to declare that he would not appoint to that office the man, however worthy he might be, who stood at the head of the most formidable part of his political enemies." He here expressly admits that the hope which induced his application was, that Gen. Jackson would not only deny that he had said he would appoint Mr. Adams premier, but that he would declare he would not appoint him, which he not only refused to do, but said he thought very well of Mr. Adams; yet, when this hope is blasted, according to his own account, he assured the General that it was the very thing "he expected," and what he wished for the satisfaction of others, to whom he asked leave to repeat it!!

Mr. Buchanan involves himself in this contradiction to escape from a difficulty which threatened worse consequences. In the same paper, after telling Mr. Markley of the call he meant to make on General Jackson, he says "Mr. Markley urged me to do so, and observed, if General Jackson had not deter-

mined whom he would appoint Secretary of State, and should say it would not be Mr. Adams, it might be of great advantage to our cause for us so to declare, upon his own authority. We should then be placed on the same footing with the Adams men, and might fight them with their own weapons."

Mr. Buchanan puts these words into Mr. Markley's mouth. They obviously exhibit the design formed by Mr. Buchanan himself, and for which he sought Mr. Markley's co-operation. Mr. Markley denies that he used the words. Mr. Buchanan reports them as employed in his conversation with Mr. Markley, and both General Jackson and Major Eaton, without any knowledge of the conference between Messrs. Buchanan and Markley, state that the same argument was used by Mr. Buchanan in separate conversations with them, ending with the same recommendation, "to fight the Adams men with their own weapons." Can there be a doubt of the truth of General Jackson's solemn averment, when it is not only corroborated by Major Eaton, but by Mr. Buchanan? for, after ascribing the proposition to Mr. Markley, Mr. Buchanan admits that he related to General Jackson "the substance of the conversation he had held with him," but forgets "whether he mentioned his name or merely described him as a friend of Mr. Clay." And yet Mr. Buchanan has the hardihood to say, in the same paper, that until he saw General Jackson's letter to Carter Beverly, "*the conception never once entered his head*" that "*he could have supposed me capable of expressing the opinion that it was right to fight such intriguers with their own weapons.*"

Is this not a singular affectation of surprise, when it is considered that Major Eaton's statement, although not published, was put in Mr. Buchanan's hands, attributing this thing to him, nearly a year before General Jackson's letter to Beverly was written, and had not been denied by him.

Why, then, did he deny the fact which produced such an outburst of feeling from Gen. Jackson, that he could not have forgotten it, or, if that were possible, must have had it revived by Major Eaton's reminder? Gen. Jackson's comment, in his letter to Major Lewis, divulges the secret of Mr. Buchanan's self contradictions. He wanted "*moral courage.*" If he had avowed the wrong which Gen. Jackson rebuked and pardoned, it would have brought him at once in collision with Mr. Clay, who had made known his fixed purpose to call to account any man who stood upon equality with him, and who suggested the idea that he was capable of being influenced in his vote by the tender of the Secretaryship. If Mr. Buchanan, then, had acknowledged what he told Major Eaton—what he urged on Gen. Jackson—what he conned over with Mr. Markley, and what the latter

says he falsely imputed to him—Mr. Clay would have had no alternative but to hold him responsible. In this dilemma he threw himself upon the magnanimity of that man, who, he knew, would pardon any weakness in one who could plead that his fault had originated in friendship for him. Mr. Webster was enabled, from what had passed around him in Congress, to fathom the depths of the intrigue as soon as Gen. Jackson's letter to Beverly was published, and before he had named the man who approached him with the overture. Colton gives a letter from Mr. Webster to Mr. Clay, about Gen. Jackson's letter to Beverly, of June 6th:

"BOSTON, July 24, 1827.

"I have a suspicion that *"the respectable member of Congress"* is Mr. Buchanan. If it should turn out so, it will place him in an awkward situation, since it seems *he did recommend* a bargain with your friends, on the supposition that such a bargain had been proposed to them, on the part of friends of Mr. Adams. I am curious to know how this matter will develop itself.

I am, always, truly yours,

"DANIEL WEBSTER."

After Mr. Buchanan came out with his response, and Mr. Clay had commented on it in his speech at Lexington, Kentucky, Mr. Webster remarking, on this speech, writes to Mr. Clay:

"BOSTON, August 22, 1827.

"Mr. Buchanan is treated too gently—many persons think his letter candid—I deem it otherwise. It seems to me to be labored very hard to protect the General, as far as he could without injury to himself. Although the General's friends this way, however, affect to consider Buchanan's letter as supporting the charge, it is possible the General himself and the Nashville commentator, may think otherwise, and complain of Buchanan.

"Ever truly yours,

"DANIEL WEBSTER."

Mr. Webster saw at the first glance, what all must see now, that General Jackson had good reason to *"complain of Buchanan."* Mr. Clay, too, repeatedly complained of the wrong he suffered, and, in spite of earnest entreaties, felt himself called on at the close of life to expose Mr. Buchanan's sinister conduct towards him. Mr. Prentice, the editor of the *Louisville Journal*, the earliest and ablest of Mr. Clay's biographers, in an article reviewing General Jackson's and Mr. Clay's last declarations on the subject of Mr. Buchanan's course towards them, after deploring the injustice which he thinks his great friend received at the hands of the majority of the American people, sums up his conclusion with saying that Mr. Buchanan was *"the very man by whose treachery and falsehood they were induced to do it—was himself the only guilty party—that he pertinaciously sought, first by lying to Henry Clay, and then by lying to General Jackson, to effect precisely the kind of bargain and corruption that he caused to be charged upon Clay and Adams."*

But the judgment which Gen. Jackson pronounced in all his public and private letters touching Mr. Buchanan's attempt to implicate him in *"deep corruption,"* his adopted son is bid to say *"was not any deliberate conviction of his mind,* as is simply shown by his cordial treatment during his whole administration—his appointment to Russia," etc. Mr. Buchanan, before he breached his proposal to Gen. Jackson, stipulated in advance (in case it was disapproved) for his pardon. His design being friendly, Gen. Jackson, although he sternly rebuked it at the time, did not make it a bar to all subsequent intercourse. It was his nature's fault to be too confiding, and to men who attached themselves to him with shows of friendship he was apt to be indulgent, without looking into their selfish motives, or relying upon the firmness or purity of their characters. He had so much reliance on himself and his power to prevent ill designs in bad men or mischievous results from their attempts, that he never feared betrayal. He put Lafitte, the pirate, at the most vital point of his defence before New Orleans, and felt that he had nothing to fear from his want of principle while under his command. In his Bank war he did not apprehend danger from its friends in the cabinet. He even trusted them at the head of the Treasury.

His confidence brought him into difficulties, but he had so long successfully baffled difficulties, that the apprehension of them never interfered with his course. His sending Mr. Buchanan abroad would have been considered, if he had been a weak and timid President, as proof of a design to get rid of a wily, unscrupulous intriguer, whose schemes in his own favor he had repulsed, and who might be inclined to practice his arts against him in resentment of what might be construed into an ungrateful return for the offer to exert them in his service. This, however, never could have influenced General Jackson in sending Mr. Buchanan to St. Petersburg. He doubtless gave him this mission in compliment to Pennsylvania, the state which gave the noblest earnest of its confidence and affection for himself both before and after his defeat in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Buchanan, notwithstanding the rebuff given him by Gen. Jackson, still went with his state in his support and was himself returned to Congress. Coming with this endorsement from his state, and having capacity for a diplomat, to refuse the state in his person would have evinced a sternness which he never exhibited towards those who made appeals to his kind feelings, based on services rendered to the cause in which he was engaged, and especially when associated with those of a great state towards which he had the deepest sense of gratitude. He gave the mission to Mr. Buchanan, I have no doubt, with pleasure. He had no fear that Mr. Buchanan would intrigue



against his country in Russia. He knew that political advancement was not to be sought in that direction. But if he had been asked to place Mr. Buchanan in position where he could barter all the offices of the government to reach the Presidency, the General would have acted as he did when that gentleman proposed to take that function upon himself to elect a President in 1825.

There have been three epochs in Mr. Buchanan's career as a politician, which signally mark his character. They stand out and show that, however devious his course, solitary selfish ambition, without regard to any great public cause, has been the guiding star of his life. During the last war with Great Britain he gave all his faculties to break down the administration of Mr. Madison, and give the triumph to the English party in the United States. If success had crowned this effort, he would have had the best claim of any public man in Pennsylvania to come into power under the auspices of the Hartford Convention. The failure extinguished his hopes for ten years. He next appeared as the zealous friend of the great man whose trumpet tones had proclaimed the war in the House of Representatives, and of the great man who had closed it in a blaze of glory. He endeavored by corrupt intrigue to bring about a coalition which would make one President, the other secretary, with a view to the succession, and, establishing this double interest for himself as the representative of Pennsylvania, to open the way to his own advancement. In this also he failed—losing the confidence of both the illustrious men to whom his scheme would have attached dishonor. His third experiment is now before the country.

For years past he has identified himself with the nullifying party of the South, contributed to establish their organ and their power in the capital, and by this means making them masters of the whole slaveholding interest, which sways that section, and through it seeks now to domineer over the North. He bargains now with the politicians who have banded together, and hope by concert in one section to enable the minority there to subject the majority in the other by dividing it. He pledges Pennsylvania to abandon her sister states of the North in her vote for him, and pledges himself to surrender the rights of the North—to sanction the breach of faith that sacrificed the compact of peace between the sections—and to give the strength of the government to enforce the usurpation that tyrannizes over Kansas. This system of controlling the majority by the minority in our elective government can only be made to work by corruption. The oligarchy of England subjects the masses of Ireland to the small body of English landlords there, by buying with money, or peerages, or high appointments, the leading men to whom the de-

mocracy of Ireland confide their interests. The circumstances under which so many northern aspirants among us have betrayed the will of their constituents, and surrendered their rights to the slave oligarchy, make it obvious that the corrupt influence of official barter has taken root here, and certainly the managers for the southern minority could not employ a more skilful adept to ply the trade of venal intrigue, through which they hope to succeed in the North, than James Buchanan.

It is necessary to success that a notorious *artiste* in an illicit pursuit should conceal his art. He must put off, if possible, the badge that marks him. That Mr. Buchanan should endeavor to obliterate the signal impression which his experiment on General Jackson left, is pardonable, and would not have provoked comment from me, had it not been accompanied by an attempt to disparage Gen. Jackson's character, and that, too, by unnatural hands. The adopted son and witness is not only brought forward to prove that his father's fireside opinion was in direct contradiction to that publicly expressed, but he is made to account for this moral obliquity by detracting from the vigor of his mind. It is pretended that "*momentary irritation*" could influence him to write down what he knew must stand as his deliberate judgment of Mr. Buchanan's character, being pronounced when he was sensible the grave would soon close over him and call him to answer for its conscientiousness.

To impress the public with the belief that Gen. Jackson's understanding was impaired, and thus indirectly weaken the force of his opinion, the adopted son, by way of excusing himself for wasting the estate left him, is induced to say :

"When General Jackson returned home at the end of his Presidency, he had not so much as a hundred dollars left of his salary. His generous entertainments at Washington to friends and to the public left him but little. The profits of his estate were also consumed. There was scarcely a day after his return that his house was not thronged with visitors from different portions of the country. The proceeds of his estate here could not, and did not, meet his expenses. Under the circumstances, and by the advice of friends, he deemed it advisable to make a purchase in the South to raise cotton. Under his direction, I went South and made the purchase of a place that had been recommended to him at \$23,000, and afterwards a small tract additional at the cost of \$2,500. To meet these and other smaller liabilities, he secured loans from the bank and individuals to the amount of nearly \$30,000. He left me his estate saddled with this heavy liability, all drawing interest. I have been thus particular in order to disabuse the public mind of the charge made by the *Patriot*, and communicated no doubt by private sources, that I had incurred the heavy debt that had rested upon the Hermitage property."

None knew better than the advisers of the individual who puts his name to this paper, that General Jackson was a most exact and punctual business

man—that he abhorred debt—never involved himself in one that he had not prepared the means to pay; none know better than they that the embarrassment and ruin of the estate left the adopted son was the work of the latter, exclusively. To defend General Jackson from the imputed incapacity—the want of care in his expenditures, and the want of circumspection as to making obligations, and judgment and energy in providing and applying the means to discharge them—I am compelled to give details of a transaction to which Mr. Rives and myself were parties, and to which Mr. Jackson refers. A simple statement will show how unjustly General Jackson's memory is assailed in the paragraph quoted. It is but a repetition of the insidious rumors spread by the newspapers inimical to him, a few years after his return to the Hermitage.

They suggested that he had inextricably involved himself in debt, and that, like another chief of the democracy—Mr. Jefferson—he would probably apply for a law to enable him to get his estate disposed of by lottery to pay his debts. Seeing these attempts to mortify and harass him, and suspecting that his adopted son, who had been creating debts without his knowledge before he left Washington, might have contracted engagements which the General desired to discharge, I wrote to him that I had money which he could command. This was his reply to my offer, the first part of the letter being on other subjects:

“HERMITAGE, February 2, 1842.

“ \* \* \* \* “Now, my dear Mr. Blair, I am truly happy to find that your pecuniary matters are so prosperous, and may God grant that that prosperity may continue to you and yours in all time to come. I will with all candor state to you, that I have felt some pecuniary pressure—that we have had to make some pecuniary sacrifices in selling some valuable property, and that I am not yet entirely free from them, and that a loan would be a convenience to us for a short time, which we would well secure. I hold my homestead unencumbered, and do not owe in my own right five hundred dollars. Andrew owns a first rate tract on the Mississippi river, of 1180 acres, and on the two plantations we own about one hundred and fifty negroes, old, middle aged and young. I could not stand by and see a combination of sharpers, swindlers—an unprincipled combination as they were—strip and harass Andrew, who had been drawn into endorsements for them, and otherwise imposed upon, without stepping forward to relieve from the grasp of such men, Andrew, at all hazards of property. These liabilities amounted to more than I at first anticipated. By great exertions, he is free from all these debts, and there only remains due the instalments upon the plantation upon the Mississippi, which is now in a productive state, and will in a few years pay all liabilities.

\* \* \* \* \*

But the means to meet the future instalments on the place we were obliged to use, to meet those swindling debts brought on Andrew by a clique of sharpers, and some of the instalments become due before another crop. Now, my dear Mr. Blair, if you have the money to lend we will, on an interest of six per

cent, or on seven—take as much as will meet the pressing demands that may present themselves. But, my dear sir, unless the loan proposed, paying interest annually, would be as profitable to you as any other you could make of it, I would not receive it—I have never injured a friend in pecuniary matters, or otherwise, and I will never do it for the short time I have to live. I wish you, with the candor of a friend, to say to me whether you have money to invest upon interest, and for what length of time you could loan it, receiving the interest the first year, and then the principal and interest by instalments. The loan secured by personal or real security, undoubted, to cover it, we would freely give seven per cent. interest on a loan for three years or four. On the receipt of this please write me—I cannot borrow of a friend unless upon just terms to him.

“I am, as usual, sincerely your friend,

“ANDREW JACKSON.”

“HERMITAGE, February 24, 1842.

“My dear Sir: \* \* \* \* I accept of the loan you have so generously offered me—a liberality and friendship which I will cherish in my bosom as long as life lasts, and bequeath it to my adopted children. It shall be secured in such a way, that life or death, nor all the calamities that may befall a nation or individual, except earthquakes, cannot deprive you of your principal and interest, and should I live, you will receive it with that punctuality that I have always met borrowed money. This loan will enable me to meet all Andrew's liabilities, and the annual crops will meet this loan, *with surety*, even at the present low price of cotton—place me at ease, and secure to him and his dear little ones and charming wife an ample fortune. \* \* \* \* I sincerely thank you for the terms of six per cent. interest; no such indulgence could be here obtained, and this shows the friendship and liberality of the act. \* \* \* \*

“Your friend,

ANDREW JACKSON.”

Mr. Rives united with me, that the loan might not bear on one alone, and to carry out the design that the debt should never be a burden to General Jackson. We authorized him to draw for the sum he wanted. From the account which Andrew at first gave of his commitments, he supposed \$10,000 would be sufficient, but some time after it was discovered that his first schedule of debts disclosed little more than half of them, and that the provision which he had made for paying for the plantation for Andrew was absorbed in meeting his old obligations. Eight thousand dollars more were then advanced, and the proceeds of the Mississippi plantation, well supplied with hands, were set apart for the gradual extinction of the loan.

It was a most ample provision, but it was not under the General's eye, and was entrusted to Andrew and the overseer. Everything was a failure, and the General then ordered the plantation to be sold and his hands brought back. It was sold for a sum which would have extinguished all the General's obligations, including the loan but his death having left the disposal of the means with Andrew, instead of employing them as directed, and as he promised Mr. Rives he would when he obtained a release of the

mortgage to dispose of the plantation, he diverted them to the purchase of an iron works, in which he both sunk the Mississippi plantation and created new debts, exceeding fifty thousand dollars. He then wrote to me that a Mr. Washington, from whom he had borrowed a very large sum, secured by a deed of trust on the Hermitage and the negroes, (second to that held by Mr. Rives and myself,) was pressing for the sale of the property, and requested me to write a letter to prevail with the legislature of Tennessee to purchase so much of the estate as would liberate him from debt. I addressed such a letter to him, putting my interest in it, and that of Mr. Rives, entirely at the disposal of the legislature, and wrote another, addressed to the Hon. Cave Johnson, for the purpose of being put into the hands of the members of the legislature. Mr. Johnson replied:

"NASHVILLE, November 6, 1855.

"Dear Sir: I received your letter some ten days ago, and delayed a reply, hoping to be able to give you some precise information in relation to our movements here. \* \* \* \* had united with me very earnestly, before we received your letter, in trying to enlist members of the legislature in the cause—\* \* \* \* was delighted with your letter, and I have placed it in the hands of Col. Nixon, a devoted friend of General Jackson, personally and politically, and a representative from the county of Lawrence—Col. Travis, a representative from Henry, enters into our projects with all his soul; but I must confess that I have but little hopes of success. \* \* \* \*"

"I am sincerely and truly your friend,

"CAVE JOHNSON."

It did succeed, however. The legislature voted \$50,000 for five hundred acres, to include the Tomb and Hermitage. On this, Mr. Jackson sent me a schedule of his debts, showing that, including the loan to Blair and Rives, they amounted to \$72,500; and after summing up his means after the sale of the remainder of the estate, he adds: "Thus you will perceive I shall scarcely get out of debt, without you and my friend Mr. Rives will consent to only receive the principal of your debt *at present*, and let me work out the balance, if God spares me in kind Providence to do so, if not, make it over to my wife and children, for my kind friend Mr. Blair, (I call you that,) for you and Mr. Rives have proved yourselves truly so, in all my difficulties in not pressing or suing me, when I have been torn and swindled and harrassed almost to death in the last few years."

Mr. Jackson, after the purchase was completed by the state, sent on state bonds, from which \$16,800 of the \$30,000 due Blair and Rives was realized, and for which he was credited \$18,000.

His proposition was that we should release the lien on the remainder of the estate for the \$14,000 of the loan, that he might sell it to pay his other debts. I knew that his extrication from old debts was only to make way for new ones, and therefore preferred using

the lien on his property to secure it for the benefit of himself and wife, during their joint lives. Their only daughter is married to a rich and very respectable gentleman—one son is provided with an appointment at West Point—the other nearly grown and educated. By saving one half of the Hermitage tract and all the servants for the family for a term of lives, likely to last some forty years, and putting beyond the power of Mr. Jackson to waste it on his hopeless schemes, the steady increase in the value of the real property made more rapid by the state improvement of the adjacent portion, together with the increase of servants during the life estates, would make it easy to return the original advance, and leave behind a considerable inheritance. Instead, therefore, of giving up the property bond for our debt, to pay other debts of Mr. Jackson, if that were possible, and assist him in a new career of speculation in iron works, lead mines, &c., we thought it best to act on our own experience of his capacity, and the opinion of a gentleman of Nashville, and one friendly to him, from whom we had this hint:

"He (Mr. Jackson) thinks that the surplus coming from the bonds will pay all his outstanding debts; but whether he is correct or not no one can tell, as he knows no more about his affairs than a child, and is not able to attend to them much better than one."

After consulting Mr. Rives, therefore, I wrote as follows to the Hon. Cave Johnson, who had interested himself with me in getting General Jackson's grave given to the guardianship of the state, and seemed also to share my anxiety to provide for the family:

"SILVER SPRING, May 2, 1856.

\* \* \* "I am anxious to see Mrs. Jackson, whom the General loved so well, and for whom I feel on his, as well as her own account, a great interest, well and securely provided for. I talked the matter over with Mr. Rives to-day, and told him I was willing to contribute my share of the means to effect the object, and he said he would assent also, and contribute to the plan, which was to sell out the whole of his property under our deed of trust, buying it in and holding it in the hands of trustees, first for the benefit of Mrs. Jackson and himself, and then to be subject to our debt, unless it shall have been paid. I am no lawyer, and know not how such a trust could be created, but my idea is, through our means, by which we still have a lien on the property, to make of it a future support for them during their joint lives, and then on the payment of what may be due us, the whole to revert to their heirs. I am ready on my part to sink a portion of what might come to me of the fund, and this at once by release, but I do not think this anything more than so much thrown away, for other debts would soon emerge to take the property."

"I wish you would have a talk with \* \* \* \* on this subject, and if he and you think anything useful can be done in this way, I hope you will sound Mrs. Jackson as to the scheme proposed, and if she and her family think well of it, they may persuade Mr. Jackson to come into it. Let me hear from you about this matter."

"Your friend,

F. P. BLAIR."



This letter was received about the time that my letter to the New York meeting appeared, exposing the conspiracy of Mr. Calhoun with Mr. Polk and his followers to destroy the organ set up by Gen. Jackson at Washington and instal that of nullification in its stead. Mr. Buchanan and his colleague and especial friend of the cabinet were both implicated in this original movement, which embodied the South in a sectional party to command the North. I did not suppose our political warfare would have the effect to break the truce between us, which had for its object the care of Gen. Jackson's remains and his adopted attachments.

But I mistook my men. Mr. Buchanan's colleague seems to have embraced the opportunity which his introduction into the concerns of the Hermitage gave him, to attack me from that quarter. Instead of answering my letter of charitable intents, and consulting with the family and the attorney, and Mr. Rives and myself, as to the best form of relief, the first intimation I had of changed feelings on the part of those I was laboring to serve, was the insidious letter signed with Andrew Jackson's name, charging me with breach of trust for publishing Gen. Jackson's correspondence without authority. My name was not, at

first, mentioned, because those who assailed me knew that the immediate subject of complaint (the extract from Gen. Jackson's letter incriminating Mr. Buchanan about the corrupt bargain he proposed) was neither written to me nor published by me. This not being noticed by me, was followed by another, signed Andrew Jackson, denouncing me, by name as a violator of Gen. Jackson's confidence and the rights which his adopted son asserted over his papers.

How my good friend Andrew, whose last letter to me was an effusion of gratitude, was brought to this point I can only conjecture. I never gave him an unkind look or an unkind word, or did an unkind thing to him or any of his family.

If the new friends for whom I have been thrown away, and my kindness rejected, make good, out of their own means, the hopes they may have inspired, I shall rejoice in it for the sake of Mrs. Jackson, who is one of the most lovely and excellent of her sex. She was "a ministering angel" to General Jackson during all the years of illness and anxiety which, after his retirement from the Presidency, closed his life.

F. P. BLAIR.

SILVER SPRING, August 15, 1860.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 897 905 9